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ABSTRACT

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Winthrop College Transformed Curriculum

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[1]Peters, Thomas J. and Waterman, Robert H., In Search of Excellence, New York: Warner Books, 1984.

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Winthrop College Transformed Curriculum

Margaret F. Hawisher

Winthrop College, South Carolina, has a 99 year tradition of preparing teachers in the Piedmont region of the Carolinas. Located 30 miles from Charlotte, N. C., Winthrop's School of Education has nutured a collegial network with nine public school districts for the past twelve years.

In June, 1982, the Winthrop College School of Education faculty met to discuss teacher education, the growing body of research on effective teaching, the increased added-on requirements of accrediting agencies and South Carolina legislation, the quality of students entering teacher education and the diminished status of the teachers as a professional.

The consensus of this faculty group (N=42) was:

1) National media and commission attacks directed toward public schools at that time, would in the near future, be directed toward institutions of higher education teacher education programs;

2) The tradition of quality service to public education in the State of South Carolina held for 99 years since the founding of the College would continue;

3) To prepare teachers for the coming century it would be necessary to break away from the traditional manner of preparing teachers; and,

4) Winthrop's administration and the entire academic community, comprising the College of Arts and Sciences and four professional schools, was supportive and encouraging of curriculum change and innovation in the teacher education program.

Specific concerns to be addressed in the revision of preparing teachers included the following questions:

1) Are five years of preparation necessary and reasonable for early childhood, elementary, secondary, physical education and special education teachers?

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2) How can the liberal arts education of undergraduates be made more relevant to the future teacher?

3) What strategies can be developed to identify and correct individual deficiencies related to public speaking, language usage, the art of presentation, basic skills and interpersonal skills in college students who wish to become teachers?

4) In light of decreasing enrollment and the anticipation of elevated entrance and exit standards, how can issues related to state allocated funds, faculty load and use of scholarly expertise be equitably resolved?

5) What techniques can be employed to reduce repetitious content but also increase the understanding of pedagogical theories and practices to an application level by the students?

6) How can college-based instruction interface with clinical experiences to permit frequent and supervised hands-on opportunities for the prospective teacher?

7) Certainly the most overriding concern is: What exactly should be included in the undergraduate teacher preparation curriculum according to educational research, professional organizations and accrediting agencies?

In the Fall 1983, an Ad Hoc Committee was selected to design a model which would be adopted for the revised teacher education program. During the Summer of 1984, a second faculty group identified specific content, further delineated the parameters of the model and established implementation dates for the revised curriculum components (see Appendix A). The commitment to this revision is evidenced by the willingness of faculty to voluntarily accept an overload of responsibility to study, debate and resolve problems which must be addressed; all of the faculty members have accepted responsibility in this process.

Winthrop College's School of Education has a well-established consortium with nine contiguous school districts. In the Spring semester, eight "master" teachers were released from their public school classrooms in this consortium to work with planning and implementation faculty teams. These eight school teachers, collectively have more than 100 years of teaching experience, and individually represent grades kindergarten through 12.

The college went to public schools for assistance in their program revision efforts because of its beliefs that as in the medical profession, teachers or practitioners must understand and be skilled in the clinical experience, and practice with many different students while supervised by certified talented professionals. "The curriculum revision is based on educational research and practitioner expertise that address the challenges facing teachers and students for the remainder of this century," according to Education Dean, James H. Rex.

Residency and college faculties joined forces to revise Winthrop's School of Education to include a team-taught interdisciplinarian core for prospective teachers. Among the changes are more clinical experiences in both simulated and actual school settings. One of the exciting aspects of working with the Residency Faculty has been their sharing with us (the college-based faculty) the dynamic classroom experiences which happen daily in classrooms. The Residency Faculty has videotaped in public schools during the regular school days; they have on film the teachers' presentations and instruction which turn young people into excited learners.

The diminished status of the teacher as a professional has resulted in the decline of top students choosing teaching as a career. "The Residency Faculty program provides prestige to the public school classroom teachers by valving the expertise and talents we bring to our profession," says Residency Faculty member Kathie Brabham. Student and faculty reaction to the residency program has been excellent. "Having teachers from all levels of the public schools has

given us a broader perspective in the classroom. After a while, it's easy to forget what it's actually like working with younger children," said one Winthrop education professor.

"I've learned some really helpful hints from the public school teachers--they're really there and can give us firsthand advice," said an education major.

The public school teachers also have benefited from the program. "It was good to get away from our regular jobs and look at teaching objectively. I'll be going back with new enthusiasm," said first-grade teacher Miriam Boucher.

"I'll be going back with so much more information," added Libby Chambers, a high school government and social studies teacher. "The Winthrop faculty have been very generous with their expertise in helping us to develop projects for our individual school districts."

The benefits of this program to teacher preparation according to Dean Rex include: an increased emphasis in the curriculum on the priority needs of beginning classroom teachers, an improved utilization of practitioner expertise, and a greater use of "modeling" as an instructional tool in the preparation of teachers. He believes that the greatest benefit, however, is that, "Students who wish to become teachers are allowed to work closely with examples of the 'best and brightest' who have chosen to enter and remain, in the classroom. By example, prospective teachers are taught exemplary teaching behaviors and, perhaps even more importantly, exemplary beliefs and attitudes towards teaching."

The benefits of this program for the public school teachers according to residency faculty member, Julia Gregory: "Good teachers need to be recognized, encouraged, and revitalized. We need to continue to offer incentives to our better teachers for the sake of our youth."

During the Maymester of 1985, curriculum teams met to identify specific content, teaching strategies and the scope and sequence of the transformed teacher education program. Materials and methods for the new program will be gathered during the Fall semester, 1985.

The Transformed Curriculum

EDU 180, Introduction to the Teaching Profession, is a required, generic, 3 semester credit hour, team-taught course for freshmen. Faculty teaching this course selected from elementary, secondary, special education and physical education programs. During enrollment in this course, students visit school buildings, meet with school faculty, principals, students and principals and discuss problems and issues specific to teaching in buildings which house elementary, junior and senior high students and special education students.

Prior to field trips, EDU 180 students are lectured on topics such as: state-wide education legislation, mainstreaming, handicapped children, values, current issues and trends. With video tapes and video equipment, EDU 180 students practice observation skills and public speaking skills.

The Junior year, teacher education students will enroll in a six semester hour block to be taught during the mornings, two days each week. The major focus of this course is on The Learner, pupils to be taught by these prospective teachers.

Knowledge of the learner, which will serve as a foundation for instructional strategies, will be presented through a wide variety of experiences including observations, lectures, simulations, peer interactions, video and audio presentations, role-playing and clinical activities in public schools. The prospective teachers will have opportunities for applying this knowledge of the learner in simulated and real school activities.

The junior year block curriculum includes content and objectives designed to:

1) Enhance in prospective teachers an understanding of the variablity of physical growth patterns in children and adolescents and how this variability affects learning.

2) Increase prospective teacher's awareness of and understanding of socio-cultural factors as they affect the learning process in their students.

3) Present to prospective teachers the basic foundations of human emotional development, factors which affect that development, and how emotions affect the rate, direction, and success of learning.

4) Make potential teachers aware of the role of cognitive development in the learning process and how to deal with differing levels of cognition among their students.

5) Enable prospective teachers to recognize the exceptional learner and be aware of procedures for referral and placement of exceptional children and adolescents.

6) Shift the focus of prospective teachers to a broader concept of communication systems and how to use these systems to advance learners' academic progress.

7) Help prospective teachers understand the role of motivation in the learning process and how to enhance motivation in learners.

8) Provide prospective teachers with several models of the learning process to give the teacher a firmer base for developing specific teaching skills.

This content will be taught in eight modules:

physical development

social development

emotional development

cognitive development

exceptional youth

communication

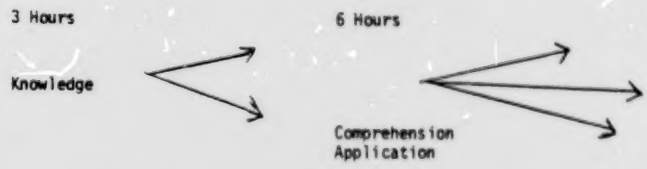
maturation

learning

The senior year begins with the Maymester between the traditional junior and senior year. The senior year includes twenty-one semester hours and, as the other education courses, is generic, team-taught, and clinical in nature.

The following schemata illustrates the scope and sequence of the senior year curriculum.

Senior Year



	MAY	
Plan	Select measurable objectives curriculum guides Scope and Sequence	Introduction to planning and instruction
Instruct	Modes, Materials T_2O, peer, simulation	
Manage	physical/learning environment	Introduction to the scope of teaching
Measure	select assessment appropriate for objectives	Elements of Effective Teaching
	Fallmester (Guided practice)	
Plan	Develop planning skills guided practice (lesson plan; unit plan	Practice of planning and instruction
Instruct	Use of modes, apply to individuals, small, large groups, monitor, awareness of pacing	Theory and practice of educational measurement
Manage	Manage environment, behavior, instruction	Methodology in Effective Teaching
Measure	Principles of testing, teacher-made tests, use/interpretation of standardized tests, variety of evaluation techniques	Preservice Internship and theoretical considerations
Profession	Ethical and legal responsibility Current trends	
	Springmester	
Plan	Lessons; short, whole, series long/short-range planning	Application of Educational theories
Instruct	Independent practice, individual, small, large, multi-group; monitor and adjust pace	Introduction to Effective Teaching Models
Manage	Practice pacing, transitions rules & regulations, record keeping	Modified Internship
Measure	Have and use measurement skills, select appropriate assessment	
Profession	Parent-teacher communication interviewing professional organizations	Models of Effective Teaching Internship in Effective Teaching

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Admissions Committee

Admissions Committees composed of faculty, public school teachers and outstanding seniors will interview education majors and review the students' credentials prior to formal admission in the teacher education program. The requirements for formal admission are:

1) Completion of at least sixty semester hours of liberal arts courses with a 2.5 G.P.R.;

2) A passing grade in EDU 180;

3) Passing the Education Entrance Examination (EEE, a S.C. mandated test of basic skills); and,

4) A successful interview with the Admission Committee.

Advisement Center

The School of Education Advisement Center will offer support to education majors by providing information and workshops related to:

1) The EEE;

2) The admissions interview and questions to be answered;

3) Student weaknesses (oral presentation skills, study skills, handwriting, etc.);

and to refer students to the campus-wide student support services, as may be necessary. The Advisement Center will also be available for recruitment activities for the School of Education

In Conclusion:

The commitment of the entire Winthrop College community to upgrading post-secondary education and teacher preparation is reflected in the allocation of financial resources, the renovation of laboratory facilities and the inter-disciplinary committees which are examining the curriculum. The implementation of the School of Education transformed curriculum has begun. As Winthrop celebrates its Centennial, 1986-87, the tradition of exemplary teacher

preparation will be revitalized and relevant for those who will teach in the 1990's. The stability and fluidity of instruction necessary in the Information Age are in place and flexibili'y within a bureaucratic structure is available.

The Winthrop Curriculum is not an add-on, patched-up program; the Winthrop Curriculum is truly a transformed program.

Appendix A

Implementation Dates for

Winthrop College Transformed

Curriculum for Teacher Education

Implementation Dates

School of Education Transformed Curriculum